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THE STUDY OF ENGLISH.

An Essay Read by Prof. S. J. Kaughman, of the Southwestern Presbyterian University, before the State Teachers' Institute of Tennessee on Friday, Aug. 23, 1877.

From time immemorial it has been the reproach of English-speaking people that they neglect the study of the mother tongue. Until within a very few years, and that only in certain quarters, there has been a growing tendency either to push entirely out or at least to restrict within very narrow limits this most important branch. It is a remarkable fact that as recently as the year 1867 there was but a single school in all England in which the English language was studied systematically as a coordinate branch. Much the same has been its history with us. How few institutions can be found in the land, whether of high or low grade, in which English is taught with a thoroughness at all commensurate with its importance. Whilst the Greeks, more than two thousand years ago, educated their youth by the single study of their own language and literature, and Germany to-day requires the study of the German to be pursued as a regular branch for eight or nine years, throughout the entire course in her gymnasiums, we are content to see our own vernacular crowded out by almost every competitor that chooses to enter the lists.

In this day of active scientific research, when the line of separation between the several scientific branches is more and more sharply defined, and the origination of new claimants to the name of sciences is the result, it is easy to see why the cultivation of our own tongue is neglected. It is lost out of sight in the race. In the midst of this eager rivalry among the *ologies*, it behooves us to ponder the possible sacrifice we are making. And in the beginning of this discussion we desire it to be understood that nothing which shall be said is meant to militate aginst or undervalue the importance of any or every department of knowledge. Each is useful in its place. The question is a comparative one. In the multiplication of branches of study, and consequent division of time, the question is what should we retain and what must we exclude from the curriculum.

And now, first, what reasons are found why we should cultivate the mother tongue (quoting from another). At this moment the English language contains all the treasures of the past. There is no collection of wise observations, of maxims, of principles, of experiences, of memories, of brief and philosophic histories that has ever appeared in any language that is not open to the English reader. We can show in every, or nearly every department, men who have made our English say what no other tongue has exceeded. Another and a potent reason is that only those that are masters of the language are qualified to transmit to posterity the rapidly accumulating treasures of knowledge of our own day. Which are the men whose names are destined not to die? Are they not those whose eloquence and power is derived from acquaintance with the thoughts and language of the masters that have gone before them, ancient or modern? Are they not those who by long and diligent and accurate study and practise have possessed themselves of the wealth of their own tongue, and are wielding this mighty agency to hand down, with little diminution of their original fire, the glowing thoughts that passed through their own minds? The case even of the silent actors on the stage of history, the makers indeed of history, is not exceptional. None need or desire more than they, worthy recorders of their illustrious achievements. Alexander the Great, standing by the tomb of Achilles, exclaimed: "O, fortunate young man in having found Homer the herald of thy valor."

A further reason for familiar acquaintance with our tongue is that, being the instrument for the communication of our thoughts and feelings one to another, much of the pleasure and profit of social intercourse depends upon it. How rarely do you meet a man or woman adorned with this graceful accomplishment; and how admirable is it when met with. It is true in a literary as well as moral aspect that a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. As every learned man is a factor in the composition of his language, either from offering some new word or words to the suffrages of the community, or in at least having a will in the ratification or rejection of such words, so should every man regard himself as a conservator and perpetuator of the purity and dignity of his mother tongue. Yet more might be said in this behalf on filial and patriotic grounds. Having then, we hope, demonstrated to your satisfaction the importance of a knowledge of our own language the next point and the one environed with great practical difficulties is how best to acquire this language. I am satisfied that I find in the breast of every teacher a response to the assertion that in the whole range of branches to be taught and learned, we experience the greatest perplexity in regard to English. The scholars, you may say, of the entire country, while professing one after another in rapid succession to have found the true light on this subject, seem yet to be groping in the dark. The result is that within the last quarter of a century the land has been flooded with numberless nameless English grammars which, while they may differ somewhat from each other in classification or other respects, have not solved the problem of teaching English, but seemingly have only added to the confusion of teachers. The stereotyped claim set up in every one for seventy years, from Murray down, that English grammar teaches the art of speaking and writing the language correctly no man has dared to deny or oppose until very recently. Prof. W. D. Whitney, of Yale, in a grammar recently issued from the press, has had the temerity to declare that the principal use of an English grammar is not to give us a knowledge of our language; and that *his* is the correct view can, I think, be shown by several considerations. In the first place, is grammar antecedent to language? You would judge from its pretensions that it must be; but, so far is this from being true, it assumes the existence and structure of language, and as a dictionary defines the meaning of words as formed and used in the language, so it is the office of English grammar to state and exemplify the laws of construction, to call attention to the idioms, etc., but only to handle materials already furnished and indeed organized. It creates nothing. It acts the part of an inquiring spectator, contemplating the curious combinations and varied operations of a piece of machinery in motion; and how long, suppose you, would it take a youth to learn to manipulate and operate skillfully a complicated machine by picking it to pieces once a day? Perhaps in 969 years, if a kind Providence should spare him so long for this special exigency. No, to learn the use of it he must use, not analyze it. But perhaps it will set this point in a still clearer light to review briefly the process of the acquisition of language from childhood up. With children it is wholly by imitation. They say and say only what they hear others around them saying, and it is as easy for them to learn to speak correctly as incorrectly if those from whom they derive their speech use it so. If the circumstances are favorable, they go on by gradual accretion to enlarge a correct vocabulary, ever accepting, and that without reflection, the words with the significations that are furnished by those with whom they associate. In cultivated families it will accordingly be found that the child has laid the sure and imperishable foundation of a correct use of his own language before an English grammar has even been thought of. If, on the other hand, he is reared by illiterate parents, the habits of language which he has inherited from them will cling to him to the end of life, unless indeed they should be gradually eradicated by a thorough education subsequently, which will enforce a thoughtful use of language, and this he will acquire by mingling with educated people and by reading correct authors rather than by the study of grammar.

And at this point I desire to call attentiou to the invaluable aid in the acquisition of our language afforded by the study of a foreign and especially a dead language. Reflect but a moment upon the painstaking labor necessary to expend upon the translation of an author from any of these tongues, the vigorous exercise of mind requisite to grasp his meaning, then the nice discrimination and weighing of words to render it accurately into our own idiom. Goethe has said that he who knows nothing of a foreign language knows not his own. This idea may be expanded a moment. As shown above the acquisition of a foreign tongue necessarily involves a careful use of our own, and secondly, in a historical sense, every language of Europe and in part of Asia is more or less closely connected with every other, so that in learning any one we are learning our own so far by derivation or kinship. Instance Latin, German and English.

But to postpone for a moment our remarks on the historical study (as it is called) of our language, the best of all methods and one absolutely indispensable is the constant and diligent study of our English classics prose and poetry; and as the thoughts of these great authors are of more worth than the garb in which they are attired, and their subject matter than the language which is but its vehicle, our first object should be to comprehend their meaning, to appreciate the great truths which they enunciate, to endeavor to rise to the height of their great arguments, to have our own souls imbued with the noble sentiments they utter. And along with this mental effort we cannot but be impressed at the same time with the clear, concise, elegant or sublime style which they employ according to the character of their several subjects. And we are not to stop with merely reading, however assiduously, these authors. Many choice passages should be *memorized* and if possible recited, whether to oneself or, better, to others; for in poetry particularly the ear is a more critical and appreciative judge than the eye. Another practice, only less useful than memorizing, is to transcribe these passages. The deliberation necessary to writing tends to fix the meaning of an author more firmly in the memory.

The course which I have just indicated is within the reach of almost any youth of ordinary mind and moderate industry. In so wide and inviting a field I would not be too precise in prescribing a course. With judicious advisers each one might consult his own preferences. Choose half a dozen, say the letters of the Spectator, some of Milton's prose, Burke's works. In poetry I would say Cowper, Milton, Shakespeare and perhaps Pope or Dryden, and I will venture to say that we would no longer hear the complaint made on every side of the tediousness of the English. Contrary to what is experienced both by teacher and pupil in English grammar, they would alike share in the delight derived from the perusal of these models; for they will no longer be dealing with the dry bones of a skeleton, but conversing with living men possessed of souls responsive to every chord which vibrates in their own breasts. The habit, too, and taste acquired in the school-room will not be lost when the pupil emerges into active life, but will lead him to explore new fields and seek new delights, and thus have within easy reach a solace to soothe and beguile many a weary hour. And now for one who would drink yet deeper from this fountain we would recommend the historical study of our tongue. English, as is well known, is a composite language. Its basis is of German origin, as the very name Anglo-Saxon implies. At the time of the conquest by William the Norman (1066) the Normans, themselves of German extraction, had almost entirely relinquished their barbarious jargon and adopted the tongue of the conquerd, the Romanic, of Latin descent, as the name again proves. As Greece, though conquered by the arms of Rome, conquered her in turn by the superiority of cultivation and art, so did the study of Anglo-Saxon hold its own against the Norman French, which sought to displace it, but succeeded only in being partially engrafted on it. To this day the staple of our language, among the unlearned especially, but to a great degree among the cultivated is of Saxon origin. From this it must be evident that, apart from the disciplinary value of the study of these tongues, they help us directly to a knowledge of the English. By this means we can trace words back to their origin in many cases, ascertaining what was their primitive form and signification and follow them up through their various transmutations and vicissitudes (for these are ever taking place in every living tongue.) In this way we will be better enabled to enter into the sanctuary, as it were, of the author's mind, and know with precision and certainty the very shade of meaning he would convey by the use of any given word according to its signification at that period of its history. Just as the ship which has touched at many ports comes laden with the products of many climes, so the words so traced and studied come down to us freighted with the wealth of the past. I quote again from Professor Whitney. He says:

"To construct them by historical processes, with the aid of all the historical evidences within his reach, the history of the development of language, back to its very beginning, is the main task of the linguistic student. Further, it is hardly necessary to point out that the history of language reposes in that of words. Language is made up of signs for thought, which, though in one sense parts of a whole, are, in another and more essential sense, isolated and independent entities. Each is produced for its own purpose, each is exposed to the changes and vicissitudes of linguistic life, is modified, re-combined, or dropped, according to its own uses and capacities. Hence, etymology, the historical study of individual words is the foundation and substructure of all investigation of language. Words are the single witnesses from whom etymology draws out the testimony, which they have to give respecting themselves and their history."

Hitherto we have been discussing the modes of acquiring our mother tongue for the purposes of our own profit and enjoyment or for the exchange of the our own hardly won treasures one with another in spoken language, and although, in this pursuit, we shall have gained much towards enabling us to communicate our knowledge to others in written form, yet special labor and practice will be necessary to attain even a tolerable degree of proficiency in this. So different indeed are these, that many men whoare regarded as fluent and able speakers, fail often ignominiously when they undertake to communicate their thoughts in writing. The converse of this is also true which seems to prove—waiving special native aptitude for one rather than the other—that success in either depends mainly upon effort in that direction. In rare instances, both may be found united in the same individual. To be practical, when shall we begin, and how, to teach boys to write English correctly? In general terms, begin early, and as said before, require them to write it constantly. And this brings up the subject of English Composition, almost as great a bugbear as English Grammar itself. Imitation of the best models and styles is to be the main reliance. Let the substance be memorized and then written out in the pupils own style and language, then compared and corrected. For at this stage it is useless to talk of original composition unless you mean merely that the pupil, having had subject matter furnished him, be required to write it out in his own language. Any other originality is preposterous. There are indeed but few original men in the world. In learning to admire the clearness of statement and force of expression, by which our great authors have revealed their thoughts to men, we are following the best and most direct method toward making that clearness and that force our own.

Revert again to the education of youth among the Greeks. It was almost exclusively that just indicated. And every scholar knows that the fruition of that instruction was the production of masterpieces, historical and dramatic, which have never since that day been surpassed if equalled.

I recur again to the great improvement in Composition derived from translating in writing a foreign tongue, which consideration tends still farther to re-enforce the claim of foreign languages to be learned. For beginners, a course of simple dictation exercises is very profitable, provided they be of an easy and natural style, and not chosen for the purpose of introducing strange words hard to spell or define.

I anticipate no little opposition to the view advanced several times in this paper—that our youth should *memorize* more; I verily believe that we have oscillated too far from the old system of the former generation and have too much substituted analytic methods for the synthetic, and, as I believe, the consequence in many cases has been, that our scholars (classical particularly) lack the breadth secured under the old masters. We pass to analysis before we have laid a sufficient foundation in facts.

Were not this paper already drawn out to an inordinate length, I should have been pleased to enter an urgent plea in behalf of English Reading in our schools. I regard it as scarcely inferior in importance to any topic I have advocated. Of all that I have endeavored to set before you, this is about the sum: The study of our own vernacular has claims upon us that no other branch can have. The principal modes of its acquisition are careful reading, careful writing, and memorizing. In conclusion, then, I confidently appeal to every man, who would not prove recreant to the filial and patriotic obligations under which he lies to his mother tongue, to foster and encourage its study and to see to it, that whatever may be excluded from the curriculum, it shall not be the English Language.

ELECTORAL COUNTS.

Jefferson's Proposed Method of Settling Disputed Electoral Votes.

Miss Sarah Nicholas Randolph, a great-grand-daughter of Thomas Jefferson, living in Virginia, sends to the New York World, Mr. Jefferson's memorandum of practical suggestions towards a bill to regulate disputed counts of the electoral vote. In the letter inclosing the document, Miss Randolph says:

"It is, as you will see, unsigned, and undated, but the handwriting is too unmistakably Mr. Jefferson's for its authenticity to be for an instant doubted. The original was discovered last April among some papers of Gov. Wilson Cary Nicholas, of Virginia, who was Mr. Jefferson's intimate friend, and his mouthpiece in Congress. Its interest would have been doubled had it come to light two months sooner, when it might have sounded, amid the din of angry faction, as a voice from the dead. It is a little strange that, while the nation was convulsed and its leading men confounded by the danger which threatened, there should have been slumbering in the archives of a private family a paper whose prophetic words and wise counsels should have commanded the respect, even though not the consent, of the bitterest of partisans."

The document itself is as follows:

Whereas, on an election of President or Vice President of the United States questions may arise whether an Elector has been appointed in such a manner as the Legislature of his State may have directed? Whether the time at which he was chosen, and the day on which he gave his vote, were those determined by Congress? Whether he were not at the time a Senator or Representative of the United States or held an office of trust or profit under the United States? Whether one, at least, of the persons he has voted for is an inhabitant of a State other than his own? Whether the Electors voted by ballot, and have signed, certified, and transmitted to the President of the Senate a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each? Whether the persons voted for are naturalborn citizens, or were citizens of the United States at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, were 35 years old, and had been fourteen years resident within the United States?

And the Constitution of the United States having directed that "the President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and that the votes shall then be counted;" from which is most reasonably inferred that they are to be counted by the members composing the said houses and brought there for that office, no other being assigned them, and inferred the more reasonably, as thereby the constitutional weight of each State in the election of those high offices is exacly preserved in the tribunal which is to judge of its validity, the number of Senators and Representatives from each State composing the said tribunal being exactly that of the Electors of the same State.

Be it further enacted, etc. (Here insert the former clause.)

Provides that the certificate of the Executive of any State shall be conclusive evidence that the requisite number of votes has been given for each Elector named by him as such. (Here add all other limitations on the preceding questions which may be thought proper, stating what the two houses shall not decide.)

And be it further enacted, that whensoever the vote of one or more of the Electors of any State shall for any cause whatever be adjudged invalid, it shall be lawful for the Senators and Representatives of the said State, either in the presence of the two houses, or separately and withdrawn from them, to decide by their own votes to which of the persons voted for by any of the Electors of their State (or to what person) the valid vote or votes shall be given; for which purpose they shall be allowed the term of one hour and no longer, during which no other certificate shall be opened or proceeded on.

Stuart Robinson.

The Edinburgh correspondent of the New York Herald is giving sketches of the more notable divines who attended the late Presbyterian Council in that city. We give this sketch of Stuart Robinson, of Louisville:

Now and then we meet a form and countenance which suggest a new habitat. Such a one for example is Dr. Stuart Robinson, of Louisville, Ky., restless, eager, vivid in speech and manner, and apparently as well acquainted with everybody present as if he had lived next door to them all his life. He is the perfect type of the Western Democrat, and every speech he makes seems to suggest fronting a miscellaneous crowd.

Yet, popular orator as he is, and his blonde face and light eyes replete with *bonhomie*, there is no greater stickler for the strict theology of his church and no better authority on its polity. He "brothers" people of other denominations, but it is for a fraternal fight of five points. "The Methodist," says he, "cannot see the eternal comfort of election and reprobation, "Well, it is like looking up at the Natural Bridge. Somebody says, 'Do you see the eagle on it?' 'No, says a gazer, 'I don't see it.' But it is there, nevertheless, though that brother don't see it. However, he sees the bridge." And Dr. Stuart Robinson elicits a round of applause for the Methodist brother because at any rate he sees the bridge.—These sobersided Europeans hardly know how to take his hearty humorous sallies, and sometimes have an uneasy feeling that he and some other Americans want to stir them up to something new."

THE death of Hon. R. T. Daniel, the nominee of the Democratic convention of Virginia for Attorney General, will necessitate some action by the State committee, Gen. Fields, of Culpeper, will probably be appointed to fill the unexpired term. The candidates for the nomination on the State ticket are Gen. Fields, Capt. Geo. D. Wise, and Major John W. Daniel.

BISHOP MARVIN.

His Return From a Tour Around the World.

St. Louis Republican.

Bishop E. W. Marvin, of the M. E. Church South, who has been making the tour of the world, arrived in the city yesterday by the morning train from New York, where he arrived by steamer on Saturday afternoon. The Bishop made the trip from England in seven days, which was said to be the quickest trip ever made across the ocean. He is looking remarkably well, and reports that he fortunately had an entire freedom from accidents of travel during the whole trip around the world, and never missed connection with vessel, car or other conveyance, on ocean or land.

He has been absent just one year, and it is a notable circumstance that he left St. Louis just one year ago yesterday, on August 21, 1876. He remained for some time on his way out at San Francisco, holding conference on the Pacific coast. He started from San Francisco November 1, going directly via Japan to the China missions of the church at Shanghai, where he held a conference with the missionaries and ordained native preachers.

Subsequently he made a tour of inspection of missionary work for practical ends through India and Syria, Turkey and Egypt, thence passing through Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, France and across the canal to Great Britain, visiting England, Ireland and Scotland.

At Bristol, in England, Bishop Marvin attended the British Wesleyan Conference. His presence there was in an official capacity as the representative of the Methodist Church South, to that conference having been empowered by the College of Bishops, at their meeting in Nashville, Tenn., in May last. He was received cordially.

His visit to that conference, it is expected, will result in the establishment of fraternal intercourse between these two bodies of Methodism. His address befor the conference was replied to by Dr. Puncheon on behalf of the conference, who at the conclusion of the address moved the appointment of a committee to consider the question of sending a representative of the British Conference to the General Conference of the M. E. Church South, at its approaching session in May next, at Atlanta, Ga.

THE New York Times says the terms of the agreement between the Western Union and the Atlantic and Pacific committees are as follows: Keene and Sage are to turn over 71,000 shares of Atlantic and Pacific stock at 25 to William H. Vanderbilt, as trustee for the Western Union Company. Vanderbilt is to give them in return an equivalent in the stock of the Western Union Company at 72. The two companies are to continue to carry on business, and all outstanding contracts are to be fulfilled, but the earnings of both are to be pooled, and the Atlantic and Pacific is to receive one-eighth of the gross amount, the Western Union retaining the remaining seven-eights. The country is to be redistricted. Superfluous telegraph offices are to be consolidated, and rates are to be raised to the old standard. The form of the contract entered into is based on the pooling contract used by the Direct and Anglo-American Cable companies. The hitch was in regard to the percentage which the Atlantic and Pacific should receive. It was settled on the basis of 8 per cent.

Pig with a Human Head.

Dyersburg Gazette.

They had strange doings up at Friendship the other day. Mr Adams, the blacksmith at that place, has a sow which on the 7th inst. dropped a litter of pigs, one of which has a perfect human face and head, the rest of its formation being that of any other pig. It has red hair on its head; its mouth, teeth, and eyes are strangely human, while one ear is that of a hog the other is that of a little child. This new and strange production is the wonder of the neighborhood. Dr Duffie, the druggist at Friendship, has preserved it in alcohol and hundreds are flocking to see it daily. We got our information from Capt. Tom Jones and Mr John McFee, both of whom we have known for years to be truthful and honorable gentlemen. Both of them have seen the pig and we are satisfied that the facts are as stated above.

THE condition of the working men of Paducah is, as faras we can learn, though not very prosperous, as comfortable as can be expected these hard times. Our mills and manufactories generally are making full time with living wages. The entente cordinale is highly satisfactory between employer and employe, friendship and good understanding the rule, almost without an exception. Capital and labor, like a healthy married couple, are working together and doing the best they can under the circumstances in hope of better times to come. The children of our honest working men are progressively enjoying the blessings of Kentucky laws; hodesty, industry, intelligence and virtue forming the standard of respectability in our midst. The financial condition of our manufacturies is good—confidence in our future is improving, and if we will all only work together our city will soon be the most prosperous, as it is one of the most beautiful, in the South or West.—*Paducah News.*

HAMPTON IN A TRYING HOUR. Gov. Hampton's son Preston was the younger of two brothers. He was not twenty years of age when he fell during a severe engagement that occurred in October, 1864, about 25 miles northwest of Petersburg, Va., where his father's command was covering the right wing of Gen. Lee's Army. At the time, both of Gen. Hampton's sons were acting as his aids, and when young Preston fell, the father galloped recklessly to the spot, followed by his adjutant-general, Major Baker, and Wade Hampton, Jr. Both of the last named were severly wounded while Gen. Hampton was lifting the dead body of his boy from the ground. Judge Wafford of Kansas City says he witnessed the scene, and saw General Hampton carrying the dead body of his son on the horse before him.

IN the law providing for testing the jetty system at the mouth of the Mississippi, it was directed that when Eads should secure a sufficient depth of water for the passage of heavy-draught vessels, the use of the Government dredges, which have been employed in keeping open another channel, should be discontinued. It having been ascertained that Eads has been successful, the Government has ordered the discontinuance of the dredge-boat service.

THE new city bonds of Memphis, Tenn., which are issued in exchange for the old, will relieve the city of much debt. Creditors are expected to give two for one.

IT is said there are 3,000 prisoners in the Texas penitentiary.